

AETC News Clips



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18 Oct 01

City to get report on Kelly pollution

BY JERRY NEEDHAM

EXPRESS-NEWS STAFF WRITER

The City Council, after avoiding the issue for years, now will have a major voice in what methods are used for cleaning up 10 square miles of groundwater contaminated by the Air Force on the city's South Side.

The council today is to receive recommendations from an independent environmental consultant and from its own staff on the strategies that should be used in taking care of the pollution and protecting residents' health.

It's unknown whether the council will vote on the recommendations today.

Adam Antwine, senior representative at the former Kelly AFB for the Air Force Base Conversion Agency, said the city staff recommendations will carry much weight because the Texas Natural Resource Conservation, the primary agency overseeing the Kelly cleanup, considers public acceptance a major factor in an acceptable cleanup plan.

"The city, from our view, is a huge stakeholder," Antwine said.

Austin-based Zephyr Environmental Corp. is recommending a modified version of one of six cleanup alternatives proposed

by the Air Force.

The recommendations, contained in a report sent to council by Daniel Cárdenas, acting director of the city's Environmental Services Department, include a city ordinance banning all use of the contaminated groundwater near Kelly.

It also suggests more monitoring to determine if potential vapors from the contamination are rising to the surface and presenting a health threat.

The department's report said that the company hired by the City Council in August is cautioning that a complete cleanup may take longer than the 20 to 25 years estimated by federal officials.

Cárdenas' report said Zephyr favored an Air Force treatment option that calls for pumping and treating contaminated water in high-concentration areas, as well as phytoremediation, a process that would use 800 poplar trees to absorb and disperse contaminants that might reach the San Antonio River banks.

But the Zephyr report said pumping should be done through vertical wells rather than the horizontal wells proposed by the Air Force. The horizontal wells, up to 1,500 feet long, could disrupt neighborhoods, and the vertical wells would be placed primarily in

public rights of way instead of on private property.

No cost estimate was provided for the option, but the Air Force had estimated a cost of \$30 million for using horizontal wells.

The Zephyr report, as well as accompanying city staff recommendations, calls for initiatives aimed at plugging all shallow wells in the plume and requiring double-casing for new wells that tap into the Edwards Aquifer more than 1,000 feet below the contaminated pool.

The Air Force already has spent \$235 million to clean up pollution that seeped into groundwater under the base and eventually spread into a plume under 20,000 homes and businesses.

Federal health officials have not found links between the pollution and various illnesses afflicting former workers and nearby residents.

Antwine said the proposed plan for the off-base groundwater cleanup will take up to three months to prepare before the Air Force submits it to the state agency for approval.

During a 45-day public comment period early next year, the Air Force is to have two public meetings to explain the plan and get public comment, Ryan said.

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Express News

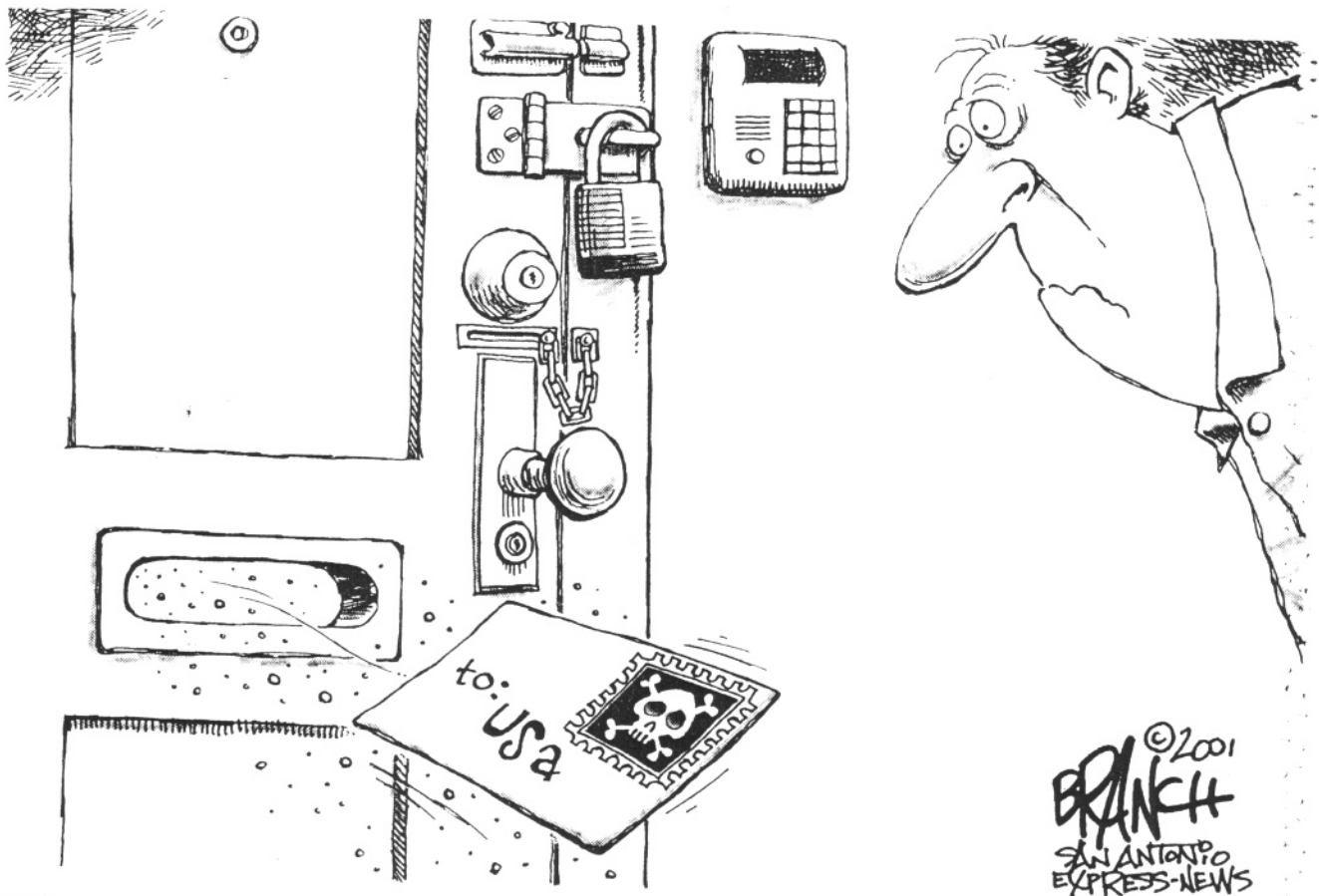
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Express News

PAGE 6B & 7B



FOCUS: AMERICA TARGETS TERRORISM

Nacho Guarache

by Leo Garza



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DATE 18 OCT 01

OUR TURN

United States needs medical spokesman

Unsettling news this week about anthrax-tainted letters in Florida, New York, Nevada and on Capitol Hill threatens to fuel a national panic.

Thus, it has become increasingly important to address the public's growing unease. The best resource for doing that is centralized, accurate and authoritative information.

New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani has kept residents of his beleaguered city informed, offering both prompt information and reassurance. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld reports daily on the air war over Afghanistan.

In the same way, someone in the Bush administration must take charge of disseminating public-health information and become a highly visible, accessible and reliable source.

That task is important not only to reassure the nation, but also to enlist the public's assistance. A public-health system overwhelmed by panicked, ill-informed callers cannot do the job it urgently needs to do.

Tom Ridge, the director of the new Office of Homeland Security, is a possibility for the job. So is Tommy G. Thompson, secretary of

Americans need accurate, timely and authoritative information about the anthrax threat.

health and human services.

But Ridge already faces a monumental task, and Thompson's pronouncements so far have sounded so overly optimistic that they inspire skepticism rather than confidence.

The fact is, the public would rather hear from a doctor on issues involving bioterrorism.

The best candidate for the task is the nation's top doctor, Surgeon General David Satcher. A former director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Satcher is articulate, reassuring and authoritative — exactly the qualities needed right now.

He should be assigned as quickly as possible to take charge of the flow of public information about anthrax and other potential health threats facing this nation.

That is not a task to be left to talk-show pontificators on CNN and the Fox News Network.

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PAGE 6B
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Special Forces' big-screen raid

The inquiring TV talking head wanted me to walk him through a Special Forces operation. Well, not just any operation. He didn't use the terms "snatch" or "arrest," but that's the commando action he clearly had in mind.

As for the target of this Army Green Beret or Navy SEAL bravado? "Bin Laden. My producer wants to know if Special Forces can get him."

Special operations forces, or SOF, are "fragile" and "delicate," words few outside the military would associate with such elite soldiers. Though highly trained, very intelligent, completely disciplined, superbly led and exactly equipped, ultimately, SOF are lightly-armed infantrymen. Stealth and accurate intelligence are their main sources of self-protection.

SOF are not designed to stand and fight. If the SOF unit's intelligence is faulty and they meet unexpected opposition, if they are detected by conventional forces armed with artillery, tanks and aircraft, or if their position and activity is compromised by an intelligence leak so that enemy security forces are prepared for them, even these elite of the elite can be killed or captured quickly. SOF's primary job is detailed recon. SOF are providing targeting data for airstrikes and making contact with anti-Taliban Afghans. SOF sniper teams may also be pre-positioned, hoping for an opportune target.

Actually, the most likely SOF "raid" in Afghanistan would be conducted by aircraft. USAF AC-130 Spectre gunships (heavily armed C-130 transports) could target a suspicious truck convoy. Ground SOF or electronic intelligence might catch bin Laden "moving" and direct an airstrike using air-delivered smart bombs.

That being noted, I gave in to television. Here's the quick script: Night time. Long-range special ops helicopters (from the 160th Aviation Regiment) lift SOF troops from a base in a "friendly country" in Central Asia. Perhaps other choppers fly "feint routes" to fool Taliban spies.



AUSTIN
BAY

The helo pilots wear light-amplification goggles and use hi-tech avionics to guide them through the mountain valleys. On the chance Taliban Stinger teams are deployed, airstrikes sweep the mountain ridges along the helos' flight

path.

Pre-positioned SOF observers watching the cave complex report the intel is "hard" — the terror kingpin is present.

Suddenly smart bombs from high-altitude aircraft begin to fall in a "rain of steel" on defensive positions protecting the cave. The bombs destroy defenses and leave surviving Taliban in shock. A "fuel air explosive" bomb slams an open area, destroying land mines and creating a landing zone. Seconds after the last bomb, SOF helicopters swoop into the clearing.

SOF troops spill from the helos and fire "disposable" mortars (and possibly tear gas) into the cave. Wearing gas masks and "night goggles" the SOF rush the cave.

A raid like this will only be undertaken (1) if intelligence is absolutely certain (which is rare) and (2) if the target is "of the highest value."

The final gunfight scene in "High Noon" is a Hollywood classic. The film's denouement is very satisfying as Gary Cooper good whips thug evil. But a cave in Afghanistan is a poor place for face to face.

It's not the ending Hollywood wants, but in my script, our guys go face to face. They blow the cave — collapse it, like the crushed basements of the World Trade Center. Taking a lousy terrorist alive at the price of American casualties is not worth the effort.

Austin Bay is an Austin writer who analyzes military, intelligence and regional issues.



Express News

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DATE 18 Oct 01

Program keeps airmen on the shelf

The Air Force's Stop Loss program kicks in during national emergencies

By Ken Roedl
Montgomery Advertiser

After 20 years of faithful service in the United States Air Force, Staff Sgt. Brenda Cooper was on her way out.

Co-workers made invitations, programs and even went through with a retirement ceremony Friday that celebrated the culmination of her career.

She even had a new job lined up with a local contractor, Titan Corp. She was scheduled to begin Oct. 8.



Cooper



Tuttle

But her plans to leave the service didn't jive with Air Force officials' implementation of a Stop Loss program, which prevents airmen from retiring or separating during national emergencies.

The program prevents her and about 150 other airmen at Maxwell-Gunter Air Force Base from retiring or separating.

Base officials expect the list to grow by 20 to 30 people for each month the program is in effect.

"Is it comfortable? No," Cooper said, admitting she understands why Stop Loss is in effect. "It's not comfortable to anybody. But everybody's world has changed, not just mine."

Air Force leadership initiated the program to "preserve those skills critical to the mission and to maintain combat capability," said Senior Master Sgt. Dean Tuttle, whose retirement is also in limbo because of the program.

Stop Loss, he said, applies equally to the Air Force's active duty, reserve and

guard troops, and is applicable to every airmen.

Exceptions were made for people who, as of Sept. 22, had an approved separation or retirement date of Oct. 1 or before, or who had made arrangements to ship household goods on or before Oct. 1.

Senior leaders are conducting a 30-day review to determine if the Stop Loss program will continue to apply to everyone or whether it will be limited to certain specialties.

Another aspect of the program requires an involuntary three-month contract extension for anyone who has a separation or retirement date between Oct. 2 and April 30.

Officials with the Air Force Personnel Center at Randolph Air Force Base say more than 11,000 airmen who had been approved to leave the Air Force are directly affected from today until April 30.

After the program is lifted, the Air Force will allow its personnel additional time to find housing, employment or account for terminal leave, Tuttle said.

Fortunately for Cooper, who lives in Prattville, her new employer is willing to wait for her. She had worried the company — which offered her the job the same day she received Stop Loss instructions — would not wait for her.

"It took me from June until last Monday (Oct. 1) to get this job," said Cooper, who has applied for a waiver. "For me, it's an irreplaceable job."

Not one to complain about the continuation of service she committed to 20 years ago, Cooper said everyone affected by this Stop Loss has been affected before.

"But you have to remember why you signed 'up,'" she said.

Tuttle, who had coincided his retirement with his daughter's graduation from Loveless Academic Magnet Program High School, can still make his goal if Stop Loss is lifted before Jan. 1.

"I can still apply, they're just not going to be able to do anything with it," he said.

MAXWELL AFB, AL
Montgomery Advertiser, 11 Oct. 01, 4A

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MILITARY PROFILE: MILITZA RODRIGUEZ

Montgomery Advertiser

Militza Rodriguez learned about patriotism at an early age.

Rodriguez knew even as a young girl growing up in Panama City, Panama, that she would someday join the armed services. She wanted to follow in her father's footsteps.

"My dad was in the military, so I grew up knowing that the best thing I could

ever do was to serve my country," she said.

Before dedicating herself to the military, Rodriguez attended college for a short time and majored in computer science. But the military was calling. She put her studies on hold and joined the United States Air Force.

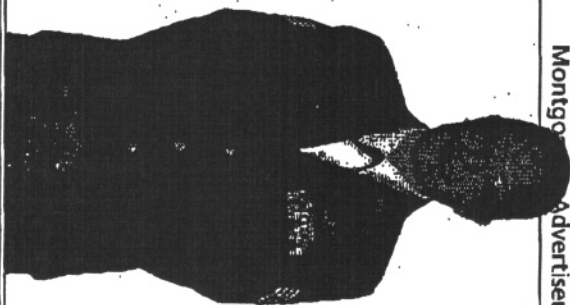
She has been in the military for almost 10 years. Rodriguez is a staff sergeant assigned as a per-

somelist on Maxwell-Gunter Air Force Base.

The 32-year-old is married to Ivan Rodriguez and has two children, Candace, 11, and Ivan Jr., 6.

Rodriguez plans to stay in the military for at least 20 years. After that, she may pursue a career in education. She is currently studying early childhood education at Auburn University Montgomery.

—*Kim Williams-Neil*



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SATURDAY

1st group of Arizona reservists called to active duty

By Jon Kamman
The Arizona Republic
Oct. 16, 2001

A group of Air Force reservists from the Valley has been activated for duty in the war against terrorism.

Up to 44 security specialists from the 944th Reserve Wing at Luke Air Force Base were called up Monday, the unit's spokesman, Lt. Col. David Thoreson, said.

Thoreson said he could not divulge whether all 44 are being deployed at once or where members are being sent. He said at least part of the group was ordered to report to Luke immediately.

The 944th, with about 1,100 reservists, is an F-16 fighter training wing. Security personnel provide protection for bases, planes and other military assets as well as perform police duties.

The call-up was the first activation of a reserve segment in Arizona. Early this month, however, part of the Air National Guard's 161st Refueling Wing was deployed from its headquarters at Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport.

The number of Guard personnel activated, believed to be security forces within the wing, has not been disclosed.

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West Valley View

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Retirees earned their discounts

To the editor:

I am appalled by your "Viewpoint" on local military retirees not willing to make a "minor sacrifice" for the sake of Luke Air Force Base security. I would like to remind you that the military retirees have served our nation in order to receive these so-called "discounts." These are men and women who served during World War II, Korea, Vietnam and/or the Gulf War. While serving, these retirees carried security clearances of one level or another. They know better than many of us the price of freedom. The Luke Air Force commander's action was a slap in the face for the retirees everywhere.

The employees manning the PX, commissary, Burger King, banks and day care center were allowed to pass while men and women who served this country proudly were told they were a security threat. Some of those employees do not even carry a DoD identification card and in some cases do not require even the lowest level security clearance. In stark contrast, our retirees were summarily denied access to affordable food, medicine and the most basic of human needs — putting at jeopardy those who must survive on modest military pensions.

Instead of embracing our retirees, we pushed them aside. These people have been there — seen that and stuck around until retirement. I am embarrassed by the actions taken by the Luke commander.

One final note: The discounts you speak of are not subsidized by the federal government. The commissary and PX are required by federal law to be self-supporting, they are solely supported by the patrons who use them — active duty, family members and retirees alike.

LaRee Zickefoose
Avondale

Retiree actions unbelievable

To the editor:

How could any retiree complain about not getting inside Luke AFB for a few days?

Please do not judge all of us by

the actions of some. Some of us are patriotic and understood. We were concerned about a situation serious enough to merit this action.

Luke's mission is to train pilots, not cater to retirees.

Retirees could drive an air-conditioned car anywhere in town. Luke personnel were restricted and working outside in 106 degrees.

What can I expect? In 30 years I have not been able to convince people that our planes do not make noise. Enemy planes make noise.

Mary E. Green
Litchfield Park

Sounds of security

To the editor:

On the night of Sept. 11, I went out into my back yard, very late, and looked up into the clear Arizona sky.

There I saw the glow of F-16 afterburners as they departed Luke. I listened carefully and heard the quiet distant sound of other F-16s at very high altitude who were watching and waiting.

I went in and got a very good night's sleep.

Robert R. Musselwhite
Litchfield Park

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